

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS

VOL. XXV

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No. 3



Henry Marchant

HENRY MARCHANT'S BOOKPLATE

See page 89

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WILLIAM DAVIS MILLER, *President* GILBERT A. HARRINGTON, *Treasurer*
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The Lands of Portsmouth, R. I., and a Glimpse of Its People

By EDWARD H. WEST

When the original settlers laid out the first settlement, Pocasset, they immediately made laws governing the size and location of the house lots. When we look back at them and see the kind of men they were, then follow their laws, as they made them, it does not seem possible that they were men who, before coming over here, owned very little land and had very little to do with government; besides, many of them had no education. Of course, there were men qualified to lead but they could not always agree or there would not have been a split-up the first year.

The land laws are what we are most interested in at this time. The "Records of the Island of Rhode Island" is a well preserved book and is the first book that they used. In it is the "Compact" signed by the 23 original settlers. There also are the first laws made by them. On the 20th, 3rd mo. 1638—"It is ordered and agreed upon that every man's allotment recorded in this Book shall be sufficient evidence for him and his, rightly to possess and enjoy."

One month later they considered the price, "Whereas there be divers, as well inhabitants as Freemen, who have taken up certain proportions of Land in the Island of Aquidneck: It is ordered that they shall pay in lieu thereof 2 shillings for every acre that they do enjoy and so the like sum to be paid of all such who shall be hereafter admitted as Inhabitant in to the Island: And it is ordered that their monies shall be paid, the one half presently and the other half at three months end, and it is further ordered that those who shall pay in their monies shall bring in a note unto the Company under the treasurers hand, his name and lands then to be registered in the Records, according to a former order."

On the 5th of the 9th mo. 1638: "It is ordered that Mr Sanford and Mr Jeffries shall lay out the house-lots for the Town, three acres to each house, to those not yet provided for; and it was further ordered that those who were upon the first discovery (and freemen) shall be provided according to six acres a houselot as near to their houses as conveniently can be."

In time they outgrew the one book, for at the General Court of March 1641:—"It is ordered that each town shall provide a Town Book, wherein they shall Record the Evidences of the Land: and shall also have power to give forth a copy thereof, which shall be a clear evidence for them and theirs to whom it is so granted. Also at this same court was established the:—

"Tenure of the Lands of Aquidneck: It is ordered, established and decreed, unanimously, that all men's properties

in their lands of the Island and the jurisdiction thereof, shall be such and so free, that neither the State nor any person or persons shall intrude into it, to deprive him of anything whatsoever, that is, or shall be within that or any of the bounds thereof, and this Tenure and Proprietary of his therein, shall be continued to him or his, or to whomsoever he shall assign it for ever."

After a while it was found that many men had never had their land recorded, and as some of it had changed hands, and the former owners gone away without giving deeds, some of the owners were not sure that they owned their land; so at the General Court held at Newport, 13th of the 1st mo. 1644 they passed the following law: "It is ordered, that for as much as according to divers orders by General Court formerly made, That all such lands as were granted to any, they should be recorded in the State Book, which should be their evidence to perpetuity, and it now appearing to this present Court that much land has been granted unto divers persons who have made sales thereof, and have since gone away, or departed from the jurisdiction, so that the original Records cannot be in due form made: Be it now established and decreed by the Court and the authority hereof, that all who have made or shall make purchase of any such lands, and shall sufficiently evince either by writing, bargain, contracts, or other testimony of the purchase of any such land or lands before one Judge of the Court and the Clerk of the Peace: that then the secretary shall have full power to record the said lands in the State Book to the purchaser; and in his name then holding the said land, which record shall be authentic to him or them, their heirs, executors or assigns, as if the said land had been originally granted, and according to that Trust in all points observed."

At a Town Meeting, held at Portsmouth, 5 Jan. 1660, five men were chosen to order all highways belonging to the town and to see them all recorded, they to be paid three shillings apiece for each day's service.

At a Town Meeting held at Portsmouth, 9th July 1660, all laws in the State Book were taken up and ordered to be copied in the New Book: "It is further ordered where as there is a book already procured which we now call by the name of the Book of Land Evidence, the said book shall be kept only for that use, for evidencing of lands therin, and that those orders in the State Book, concerning the tenure and evidencing of lands shall also be recorded therein.

"And for as much as there may be an appearence of danger of having the said book lost by having it kept in a remote place, and for the prevention of which danger it is also ordered that the said book is left to be kept at the house of Mr William Baulston untill the town take further order about it." William Baulston kept a public house at that time.

At this time we shall see what care those men took of their records. At a General Court of Elections, Portsmouth, May 1647: "Be it enacted by these present Assemblie, that the General Recorders Office shall be in generall, to have a Coppie of all the Records or Acts of the Generall Assemblie, Generall and particular Courts of Judicature, Rolles of the Freemen of the Colonie, Records, Sales, and Bargains of Land, Wills and Testaments, and order of the Townsmen touching the Intestate, Records of the Limitts and Bounds of Towns, their Highways, Driftways, Commons and Fencing, Privileges and Liberties. And for as much as matters of greaters concernment ought to be kept and preserved with the greatest vigilance; Be it enacted that the Generall purchases, (which are all we can show for our right to our Lands, and the Charter, which is that which gives us who are Subjects, right to exercise authority one over another) be kept in a strong chest, having four several Locks annexed thereto, and that each Town keep a key thereof, that so, as there is a common right and intrest therein, there may be no access unto them in a divided way, (lest also they be divided), but with a common consent. And let it further be enacted, that this chest be kept in the

safest place in the Colonie: and the Generall Recorder, also, should have the key to the Room in which it is placed." R. I. Col. Records.)

The General Recorder still keeps the key, as those who have used those records know.

At the start of the settlement the lots were ordered to be a certain size and the measurements were given. Later the grants read, so many acres "more or less, according to quality." The quality of the land governing the size of the lot. I have not found any lots that were less than the stated amount but in some cases the amount given was twice the number of acres granted.

Many grants were never recorded and I found mention of them as being the bounds of the adjoining land.

Some deeds are accompanied by depositions of men who knew of the earlier transactions. In one case I found a deed given by the son of a man who died before the sale was completed.

In 1644 it was agreed that only the freemen who were purchasers had power to dispose of the land. At the same meeting it was agreed that all undivided land, north of the Mill Swamp footpath, was to remain to the town forever.

In 1657 it was voted to dispose of 200 acres of land to any who wanted it, but it was later decided to add 100 acres more as the divisions would be too small. There was another division in 1693, while in 1713 practically all the commons were laid out, the highways straightened and the town was finished.

Since then very few new highways have been laid out, the Turnpike being the only new one of any importance. The others have been developed with the cutting of large estates into building lots.

In 1640 there was an agreement about the Line between Newport and Portsmouth: "The sd line to begin half a mile beyond the Sachuest River, on the south east side of the Island and so in a straight line to run to the nearest point of the Brook to the Hunting Wigwam, now standing

in the highway between the two towns, and so by that line to run to the north side of the Island."

In 1656 there was granted 70 acres to Bartholomew West, in behalf of William Almy, near the line. This land did not extend to the line, so when Newport granted land in that section, it was run to the land of Bartholomew West. At a Town Meeting, 5 Jan. 1660, it was voted to appoint a committee to meet at the house of the said Bartholomew, and lay out, with men sent by Newport, the Line as recorded. This was done and the line was run in its original location. The land granted by Newport was left to the grantee but the purchase price of the land in Portsmouth was to be given to the town of Portsmouth.

As we all know, the first settlement was at the Spring. It has always been my supposition that the reason for settling here, aside from the fresh water, was that the land was more easily cleared, although I have found record of a wood-lot. As more people came to the Island, and it was found that land in other parts was better for agriculture, this section was gradually acquired by several men.

The Town of Portsmouth was started soon after the first settlement; in fact, part of the first settlement was included in the town. Some of the house lots around Bristol Ferry were among the first grants. As finally laid out, the town extended as far south as Sprague Street and from the east shore to the west road.

In the center of the land between the East Road and the West Road is a brook which runs into the Town Pond. This was called the Town Swamp, and in the list of highways in 1661 the swamp is mentioned as being 25 rods wide at the end toward the Town Pond, 33 rods about the middle and 11 rods at the end by Mr. Briggs. There was an unrecorded highway running along this brook. At the first it probably ran from Wind Mill hill, but Daniel Wilcox fenced the south end of it. There was a jury engaged in investigating this apparent steal, and although there were a number of depositions saying there had always been a highway there,

the jury could find no record of it in the list of highways and so Daniel was allowed to keep this land.

Gradually the whole highway was granted to abutting land owners. The water of this brook was probably used in the homes, and I suppose the highway was closed to keep the cattle out of the brook. At the junction of the roads was a watering place, which, in 1713, was laid out as a public place for the washing of sheep and a watering place for the benefit of the town.

To the east of this place is a level tract of 4 acres which was granted to Stephen Brayton in 1713. This land was known before that time as the "Training Place."

At the head of the Town Pond is a tract known as the Baulston Homestead. It was here that William Baulston had his public house, which was the place where the Book of Land Evidence was ordered to be kept.

On the west shore of the pond were the houses of Lott Strange and of John Anthony. In 1656 they were granted a right to dig a ditch, seven or nine feet wide, from the pond to the dry land before the house of Goodman Strange, "for the bringing up of any goods more conveniently. This permission was needed as there was a road, until 1715, around the shore to Bristol Ferry.

Just above the ferry is the 3 acre lot that Richard Searl sold to Mary Paine, afterward the wife of John Tripp, for a pint of wine. This sale took place, according to a deposition made by William Collinge in 1666, at the house of William Baulston. We may suppose that Mary Paine was a bar-maid in William Baulston's public house, and that Searl, who was a very early settler, had become tired of the place and was willing to sell out for one more drink. Although he gave no deed, the Town Council ratified the sale, and the land was used by John Tripp for the site of his ferry house.

In 1719 the land to the south of the ferry was ordered to be kept open for the convenience of the public in importing and transporting horses, cattle, sheep, wood, etc.

The 3 and 6 acre lots were on the east side of the road to the ferry. They set back from the present road, and the land between the lots and the road was granted in 1693 and 1713.

The first road we come to on the right, Stoney Lane, is mentioned in the 1661 list of highways as "between Richard Bordens and Mistress Harts is a driftway 2 rodd 5 foot."

About 65 rods south of this there was a lane to the watering place, mentioned in the 1661 list as the "lane between Samuel Wilson and Job Hawkins." This was called Hawkins Lane; on the north side was the house of Richard Hawkins, whose wife, Jane, was the friend of Anne Hutchinson. Their land was given to their son, Job Hawkins, who sold it in 1660 and went back to Boston. I have found no further record of him until 1683, when it appears that he had returned to Portsmouth, a town charge. In the treasurer's report there are several items of expense for his care, and finally there is 3 shillings 6 pence for a winding sheet and 4 pence for a half pint of rum for the watchers. In the 1713 grants, part of this lane was granted to John Anthony and the rest of it to John Keese, the then abutting land owners.

Along the shore was the "Long Meadow," acquired of several grantees by Samuel Wilbur. At the mouth of the brook was the "Round meadow" of John Porter.

This brook was called the First Brook in 1643 when Robert Ballou was granted 10 acres. Today it is known as Willow Brook, but I prefer the name mentioned in 1659, "Little Silver." Does your idea of those first settlers picture them as people who would give a brook such a name as that?

Going down the west road, known in 1717 as the Kings High Road, we come to another brook. This must have been very much larger in the early days, as it was then known as the Mill River or sometimes as the Two Mill River. On the bank of this river, nearly down to Freeborn's

Creek, stood the mill of James Sands and Samuel Wilbur, the land being granted for it in 1642. William Freeborn purchased it in 1655 and it remained in that family until after 1800. John Tyler also had a mill on this stream. South of the river, in the center of the tract, was the "Great Lot" of Randall Holden. Somewhat back from the road stood the house of John Cory, at whose house the Town Council met, and even after his death the meetings were called "at the house of the widow Cory."

Continuing along this road we come to what is now the property of the U. S. Government. This was part of the 240 acre grant to William Baulston. There is a small stream running through it on which stood the mill, built by George Lawton in 1648. There was also a way left to this stream to give access to a watering place.

The highway that we passed was laid out in 1683 as "highway 2 rods wide beginning at the sea side on the west side of the Island at the head of William Freeborn's lot and so to run that breadth to the Common at the head of the land laid out to Ralph Earl, dec." In 1717 it was ordered a driftway down to the sea or salt water, "for the benefit of His Majesties subjects to Pass and repass through, both for cattle, horses, carts, wagons or any carriage or creature whatsoever."

Somewhere on the next large farm there is a spot mentioned at a Town Meeting of 16 April 1657: "It is consented unto by vote that Thomas Shrieve hath liberty to sett down for the present upon that house plott that John Porter hath given him liberty to sett down for the present, upon his wife's peaceable and good behaviour towards her neighbors: untill he can more conveniently provide for himself or the town take further orders. Mr William Baulston, Philip Sherman and Mr John Briggs are appointed to speake with Shrieves wife and William Charles and George Lawtons wife and to give them the best advice and warning for their own peace and the peace of the place."

Next we come to the Wading River on which stood the mill of George Lawton, who was granted 40 acres "when he hath built a sufficient mill for Mr. Baulston." Most of his land was on the east side of the road, he having only enough for a mill and his house on the west side.

As we cross this river, let us stop and think back to a Town Meeting held on the 25th of April, 1672: "Whereas this Town stands Indicted in the General Court of Tryalls for the deficiency of the Bridg on the Common nere Georg Lawton's house: The Towne Conceive that Bridg is Occasioned by the said Georg Lawton makeing a damm there: and therefor doe conceive he Ought to Maintain the said Bridg: Therefor the Towne doe Order that two men be chosen by the Towne to go to the said George Lawton and in the Townes behalf desire him to make the said Bridg Suffitent, or otherwise leave the highway in the like Condition it was before he made that damm." The persons chosen were Robert Dennis and Sajant Jacob Mott.

Evidently the committee did not make a favorable report at the meeting held 14 Oct. 1672 because "The Towne doe now Order that men be againe sent to him to Signefy that they are not Satisfied that a Bridg Should Continew in the Towne Soe dangerous. and that if he doe not take Some Speedy Course to mend it. and to make it in a safe Condition for people to pase and Repase. the Towne will be forced to take Some other Course therein which they Rather desire may be prevented."

Back of George Lawton's was the 100 acre grant to Thomas Cornell. South of this, Edward Hutchinson had a grant of 100 acres, also; while Joshua Coggeshall acquired all the land south of that as well as the Hutchinson grant. But Joshua did not stop there; some of his land was in Newport, and even today some of it is owned by his descendants.

Turning through the road to the east we will stand upon the bridge, called in 1713 the New Bridge, as the west end of this road was not cut through until then. To the north is

Wading River Swamp, while north of that is the Round Swamp. Here, also, was the farm of Thomas Cornell, called the Circuit Farm.

On the south are the grants to William James, Hugh Parsons, John Cranston, Nicholas Brown, John Room and others. Farther east, before the days of the man-made ponds of today, was the farm of Thomas Lawton, called the Hunting Swamp Farm.

Continuing along this road we come to the site of the Southern School House, where the widow Sarah Strange took up her residence after the death of her husband; for at a Town Meeting in 1746, she and her family were ordered out, so that the school house might be improved in the use for which it was built. Was she an early Communist, demanding that public buildings be thrown open for the people?

Let us now turn down the Newport path until we come to a road, nearly to the line, which was laid out in 1713. Turning east through this road we come to what has been for many years known as Wapping Road. This road was mentioned in the list of 1661, and ran between many of the large farm grants. In the 1717 list of highways mention is made of the "Great Rock" near the line, a great mass of pudding stone.

The farms here belonged to Bartholomew West, Samuel Hutchinson, and John Sanford. On the west side of the road was the Long Swamp farm of Thomas Lawton, made up of several grants which he purchased of the grantees. On the east side was the farm of Thomas Burton, granted in 1640, to run from the middle of the first water south of the second sandy point to the middle of the fourth water. In 1648, in a grant to Thomas Cook, mention is made of Mr. Burton's ferry. I have never been able to find any other mention of this ferry. I suppose it was probably the first ferry to Fogland. Turning east through a former road we come to Sandy Point farm, first granted to William Aspinwall, and after he left, to Edward Hutchinson.

We will now take a cart path to the north, passing the grants, on the right, to Ralph Cowland, Giles Slocum, John Cranston and Thomas Cook. We now come to what has been called for many years, the Glen. This was granted to William Brenton but was acquired by Giles Slocum, who built a fulling mill on the bank of the stream.

North of this was the farm of William Brenton, called by him Middleford Farm. There was a broad approach to this farm, for, in the 1661 list of highways it says, "the way to Mr. Brentons farm from the Newport path is 20 rods broad."

Returning to the Newport path we come to a brook, now called Mint Water Brook, which crosses the road and runs into what was known in 1657 as Briggs Swamp, when Phillip Sherman was granted 30 acres here. To the north of this, on the east side of the road, was more of Phillip Sherman's land, in what was known as Birch Swamp. Here, also, was the land of William Almy, who fenced in the road to the watering place and was compelled by the court to open it again.

Turning to the west, we go up Stub Toe Lane and come to a swamp on the north side of the lane, that is mentioned in the records from 1649 to 1728. It seemed to be a sort of a land-mark and was called in nearly every case "Solentary Hole." The name still fits the place.

Turning to the right, we come to Watch Hill. On the corner of Mill Lane, a road cut through in 1713, was a piece of land left to the town in the 1713 grants. On it was a watch house, although at that time it was in a dilapidated condition. Later on this land was used for a wind mill with the understanding that: "Provided that in time of war the town be not restricted . . . in building a watch house thereon for the defence and safety of the said town."

At the end of this road we come to the old Quaker Meeting House. This land was granted in 1659 to William Cadman, sold to Robert Fish in 1688, and a half acre of it sold by him in 1708 to the "people sometimes called in scorn,

Quakers, the land on which stands the meeting house" which makes the building date before that time.

We are now at the top of Quaker Hill. Let us look in all directions, as the view from here is of the best. To the southwest is a large stretch of rolling land, some of it swampy, the center portion of which was granted, to several men, as early as 1648. The land bordering on the east, south and west sides was not granted until 1713, while that on the north end was granted earlier.

In 1692, Robert Hodgson sold 2 rods of land and a house, on the south side of the road running west from the meeting house, to the Quakers. This was probably their first church. They sold it to Joseph Morey in 1700, which was probably the date of building the present church.

To the northwest is part of the Mill Swamp, land granted quite early. Here were the grants of John Hall, George Parker, William Hall and William Havens. Just back of the Quaker land there was a mill dam.

Southeast of us were the grants to Thomas Slow, George Lawton, his brother, Thomas Lawton, and William Wodell. This land was acquired by Thomas Lawton.

Northeast were the grants of Edward Wilcox, Thomas Spicer and Thomas Emmons. These were all acquired by William Wodell.

Let us look down the hill and try to picture the story as told by Daniel Lawton, 25 September, 1664, at the inquest on the body of Thomas Brownell: saying "yesterday in the afternoon, Mr Thomas Brownell, being at Thomas Lawton's house, Mr Brownell asked the deponent whether he would ride toward Portsmouth town along with him, the deponent answered he would. So they both rode together, and when they were going down the hill at the head of William Wodells ground, Mr Brownell put his horse on a gallop afore the deponent, whereupon the deponent also put his horse and presently out ran Mr Brownell and got afore him, and so continued on his gallop some distance before he looked back to see where Mr Brownell was, then

he spied his horse running alone out of the way into the swamp, whereupon the deponent forth with, not mistrusting eminent danger to the man ran and turned the horse and brought him into the way where presently he saw Mr Brownell lying on the ground, and the deponent called but none answering he let the horse go and went up to him and took him by the arms, whereby and also by the efusion of blood from him on the ground he perceived the sayed Brownell was dead." The verdict of the coroner's jury was: "We find by evident signs and appearances, as a very great efusion of blood, and the reins of his bridle being broken and lying near to where he lay, as also an aparent sign of a stroke on a tree near where he lay and some blood and hairs sticking on said tree. That the said Brownell came to his death by riding furiously down the hill, was thrown or cracked against said tree and his skull broke and to the best of our understanding his brains came out."

We will now go down the hill to Freeborn's Lane, known in 1644 as the Mill Swamp Foot Path. Turning through here to the New Lane, laid out in 1694, we find a small hill, called at that time "Apes Hill"; the reason for this name being buried with the people of that time. The land from a thousand feet west of this land was not granted until 1694 and some of it not until 1713.

I will now read parts of some depositions, showing that the difference in the people of then and now is not as great as one would think. This is about a man who lived on Freeborn Lane.

Joseph Johnson - - - "Testifieth that he being at the house of Benjamin Hall - - - did ask said Hall's wife for a gill of rumm, and the said Halls wife replied that she had no lisenice to sell but never the less she would let him have a gill of rum & the rum was brought & when sd Johnson was about to go away he asked what was to pay for the rum, but sd Halls wife being gone to ride out, left change with her younger brother to take pay for the rum & likewise the boy did take pay for the rum - - -"

Be fore me Giles Slocum Assistant.

Andrew Peters, late of Newport - - - - testifieth to the truth of the above written evidence.

Before me Giles Slocum Assistant.

But here is another one.

"Andrew Peters - - - - testifieth - - - - being at the house of Wm. Brightman - - - - came Joseph Johnson and would have the above sd Peters go along with him then sd Peters said he could not go with Johnson & then abovesd Johnson told sd Peters he would give him a treat & nine shillings in money and ye sd Thomas Cornell had hired sd Johnson to gitt one to goe with Johnson to see who Johnson could gitt drink of - - - - then sd Peters went with Johnson to one house and asked for a dram & there was two women and a boy one of them women replies they did not sell drink nor had they any lisens to sell so them two women got on a horse & rod away then Johnson asked the boy for rum and made him fetch two gills and Johnson gave the boy one piece of money but who that boy and them two women was or what their names was sd Peters doth not know - - - - sd Peters & Johnson went to ye above Cornells house next morning came Giles Slocum then Johnson & Slocum did whisper together then sd Slocum writt something but what it was sd Peters do not know nor never knew and further ye sd Peters took no ingagement to any writting that Giles Slocum writ and further saith not.

Taken upon oath Sept. 9th day 1709

Benjamin Hall Justice."

On the opposite side of the road is the place called South-side; on the plat made in the year 1726 and now in the Town Clerks office, it is called New Town. This section was first mentioned in 1693, being bounded by the land of the widow Lay on the north and by the land in the possession of Nicholas Brown on the south. It was cut up in a number of very small divisions and the grants dragged over a number of years. This land did not carry a freehold with it;

that is, the grantee, if he owned no other land, was not entitled to land in any other division of the commons.

Turning up the road on the left we come to Wind Mill Hill, now called Butt's Hill. In the first records this is called Brigg's Hill. There was probably a wind mill erected here very early. In July, 1667, the governor gave orders for the erecting of a beacon on Mill Hill.

Just above this road is the smallest grant on record, aside from those in South Side, $\frac{1}{2}$ acre to Benjamin Chase of Tiverton.

We have now come to the east side of the town. Not only were there 3 and 6 acre lots but also 2 and 4 acre lots. I have found no change in the laws or any information about this.

Here among others were the lots of John Briggs, John Hall, Old John Mott, Thomas Jennings, Henry Percy, William James, John Archer and many others.

There were also a few small house lots on the east side of the road. In this section was the land that Richard Hart sold in 1664 to Peter Tallman "by Turf and Twig," this being one of the few instances of this mode of sale mentioned in the records.

In the settlement of the estate of Anthony Paine, widow Rose Paine deeded 8 acres of land to Lott Strange. Underneath the copy of this deed is written, "This deed with the above mentioned land I doe surrender to thee John Keese and thine from me Lott Strange."

It was here that Anthony Emory kept his public house. Anthony had a well in the highway into which a drunken Indian fell one night and was drowned. Anthony was indicted but the case was dismissed when he filled the well up. The Indian, called by the English, Sam, was from Mount Hope and was found dead 17 July, 1670. Among the Indians testifying at the inquest were Tom Dumplin and the Indian Squaw wife to the Sachem Phillip.

She testified that she heard Sam and Tom Dumplin have many angry words together, the Sachem Sam saying to Tom "go and fetch me a quart of drink" and Tom answered

"no I will not - - -" "I also heard Tom Dumplin telling Sam he was always angry with him and bore him a grudge for that he the said Sams father had formerly Burnt Toms fathers and Brothers house and had also cutt his Brothers hair."

Peter Tallman acquired much of the land in this section, some of which he made over to Joan Briggs before they were married. Peter must have been a nice neighbor, for several times he was under bonds to keep the peace, and at Court in 1688, Martha Lay, the wife of Edward Lay, testified that she was "still in fear of her life of Mr Tallman and feared that some time he would murder her."

Edward Lay purchased his land in 1661 of Daniel Wilcox, who reserved one rod, where his wife was buried.

Here also was the home of Captain Richard Morris, who acquired his land of several grantees but sold it all to Peter Tallman.

Next we come to the road to Sanford's ferry. In 1661 this was a driftway $3\frac{1}{2}$ rods wide.

In 1734 a committee was appointed to inspect the records relating to part of this highway. They reported, "we find the ancient records so much defased and torn that they are all together unintelligible."

This next section of land was used for meadow land. I have found no record of any house ever having been built upon it. These grants were small: Samuel Hutchinson owning 6 acres on the corner and next to him was the 3 acre lot of John Sanford, then 3 acres belonging to Adam Mott and next to that was the 3 acre lot of Thomas Spicer. This was called Spicer's meadow many years after he had sold it. Next came 6 acres belonging to William Freeborn. In the recording of this land it says by "grant and purchase from others." Who the others were is not recorded. Then came the Barn meadow of William Baulston. Between these last two meadows there was a highway, 4 rods wide, down to the brook. This was fenced in before Thomas Durfee acquired the land from his father-in-law, Gideon Freeborn,

and the town council ordered it opened up again. This was not done for many years.

Opposite the Barn meadow was the 4 acre house lot of Thomas Burton "on the hillside," granted at the same time as his farm.

Turning by the Baulston Homestead we will take the road to Anthony's Ferry. On the left is a driftway to Sanford's Ferry that runs through the Calfs Pasture.

On the right is the first house lot of William Brenton, butting upon the Town Pond. We have now come to the site of the original settlement, where the lots ran from the Great Cove.

On the north is the North or Claypit Field; in front of us is the "Muskito" Marsh. North of this marsh is the Flag Pond, while beyond that is the plat now called Common Fence Point, which was granted to William Brenton in 1640, being 60 to 64 acres.

As we reach Anthony's Ferry we see what is now called the Hummock but what was called in the early records, the Great Rock or Great Rocky Hill.

William Almy was granted 8 acres in the southern part and sold it to Richard Bulgar in 1646. More of it was granted to Richard, but not the extreme southern end. This was called Samuel Hutchinson's Hummock, but I can find no trace of its ever being granted to him. Samuel Hutchinson never had any of his land recorded during his lifetime, but when his will was recorded, many small records of his land dealings were recorded, too.

Richard Bulgar cut a road of 2 rods in width to the west of the Great Rock and gradually sold part of his land. His first sale was to Richard Hart in 1659. This passed to Peter Tallman and then to Thomas Durfee, who finally acquired most of the point, which was spoken of in the old records as the south east corner of the place called the Common Fence.

Joseph Anthony purchased 2 acres in 1674, and in 1681 he was granted by the Town 45 rods on the east side of

Rocky Hill, from the Towns Common. The beach at this point is declared in the 1717 list of highways to be Town property and so to remain for the use and benefit of the public for importing and transporting horses, sheep, etc.

The following letter to the Town Council shows that Richard had his troubles after Thomas Durfee moved to his new land.

“Honorable

“the Complaint of Richard Bulgar that he demandeth protection and Redress gainst drunken Indians who in their drunkenness broke down my fence in several places passing between John Simmons his house and Thomas Durfee where they had their drink: So that my Self being at the last town meeting: in my absence my wife was forced to bolt herself within the house but Sassapanuitt being drunk with other Indians attempted with throwing of stones break open the door upon her and put her in a very great fright; they taking the wood that lay at my door and throw it about the ground and thus am I lately disturbed by drunken Indians since drink has been sold there so that I cannot be at peace by day nor night and my fence hath been broken down in several places by the Indians to the ground which disturbance I never had till Thomas Durfee sold drink for a Red ress of which abuse I hope the Town will take care to prevent for the future ”

So shall I remain ye

friend and servant

Richard Bulgar.

In 1686, Richard Bulgar, then about 74 years of age, made over his remaining land to the town, for the maintenance of himself for life. In the town treasurer's report for the year 1687 are the following items:—“a pint of honey and a pound of figs for old Bulgar 1s.3d. to Joseph Timberlake for the hire of an Indian to tend old Bulgar, 8s., to Matthew Grennell for nails for old Bulgars coffin 6d.”

Let us now climb to the top of the Great Rock and it is a climb, too. There is a grand view from here for we are about 125 feet above the sea. Down the Pocasset River we see Little Compton in the distance, then Punkatest and opposite us the Pocasset Purchase. North of this is Assonet, across the Taunton River is Swansea, then Sowams and Bristol behind us. At all these places Portsmouth men were early land owners.

I have heard it said that the reason for this spreading out in the other towns was the grasping way of an Englishman, striving for more land. I do not agree with this. They had families in those days and had to have land for their sons and the families that were to follow. Read over any of the old wills of the early settlers; this son to have this land, another to have land in some other town "where he now dwells" and so on.

South west of us is Sanfords Cove, in which is the appropriately named Spectacle Island, first mentioned when Samuel Wilbur sold it to Thomas Butts in 1665. Also the 2 acre "neck of land" granted to the same Samuel Wilbur in 1638. There, too, is the "little bay" mentioned by Nicholas Brown, while Easton's Point stands out as it did when those first settlers saw it. Over the land called by John Sanford, Mackpela,* we see the marsh and Gatchell's Pond. Then comes the Neck, on which was built the first meeting house, while right across the mouth of the cove is that point on which Thomas Gorton built his house, the possessor of which was ordered in 1642 to keep the "ferrie."

How many have thought of the cause of the settlement of this town? The leaders, Coddington, Clarke, Coggeshall, Sanford, Wilbur Brenton and many others, were not men

*The only meaning I can find for Mackpela is a Biblical one, *burial place*. (Gen. XXIII-19, XXV-9.) Austin says that John Sanford had a child born in 1640 who died young; possibly this child was buried there although I do not think there ever was a house upon the land. John Sanford had 8 acres here and sold it to Samuel Hutchinson. The exact location can not be found.

who would with one accord leave everything and just start another colony. These men were all settled at Boston, merchants and artisans, some of them members of the General Court. Boston was a growing place so why should they go to a wild country and start another colony?

There came a day when 75 men of the Bay Colony were disarmed because they met and talked about religion in a way not in keeping with the leaders of that place. Who started all this?

A woman, born 300 years too soon, Anne Hutchinson. At her house were held the meetings at which those differences in the religious beliefs were discussed, differences which led to banishment. Many of the men who settled here attended those meetings and all the others were believers in this new doctrine.

What would have happened around here if these meetings had never been held? These men would never have left Boston, practically in a body, as they did. The Island of Rhode Island, bound to have been settled some time, would have had a far different story.

With another class of men, the conditions, which to us seem to lock and interlock and form the government that has worked out so well, would have probably been entirely different.

Plymouth Colony possessed the land westerly to the river; this would have remained in the possession of the Bay Colony, which would probably have claimed the northern part of the state. Connecticut would surely have kept the land to the Narragansett Bay and the islands would have been divided between the colonies.

We of this state should realize what a debt we owe to Anne Hutchinson, for without her there would never have been Rhode Island.

New Publications of Rhode Island Interest

Rhode Island and The Sea by Howard Willis Preston, a pamphlet of 140 pages issued by the State Bureau of Information.

Rhode Island Three Centuries of Democracy by Charles Carroll, in four volumes, illustrated, published by the Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1932.

The Letter Book of Esek Hopkins first commander-in-chief of the United States Navy, 1775-1777, transcribed from the original letter book in the Rhode Island Historical Society and just published by the Society as a volume of 151 pages in a limited edition of only 200 copies.

The Life of George Washington from a Rhode Island Viewpoint, by Thomas F. Cooney is a pamphlet of 29 pages.

Bishop Berkeley, His Life, Writings, and Philosophy by J. M. Hone and M. M. Rossi is a volume of 286 pages printed in London in 1931.

Old Time New England for April, 1932 contains an illustrated article by Daniel Berkeley Updike on the restoration of the colonial altar piece of St. Paul's Church at Wickford, R. I.

Americana for April, 1932, contains an article on *Rhode Island's Contribution to California* by Eileen M. MacMannus.

The New England Quarterly for April, 1932, contains an article on *Richard Partridge, Colonial Agent*, by Marguerite Appleton.

A History of Grace Church in Providence, Rhode Island, 1829-1929, by Henry Barrett Huntington together with an Inventory of Memorials and Funds compiled by John Hutchins Cady, Providence, 1931, 237 pages.

The New England Historical and Genealogical Register for April, 1932, contains an article on the Dickens Family of Block Island by G. Andrews Moriarty.

Education for June, 1931, (p. 605) contains an article on *Samuel Gorton, Champion of Liberty* by J. F. Santee.

Antiques for May, 1932, contains an article on *Another Miniature* by Gilbert Stuart.

Notes

The following persons have been admitted to membership in the Society:

Mrs. Charles H. Smith

Mr. Arthur S. Phillips

Mrs. Seeber Edwards

Mr. Stuart M. Aldrich

Mr. Norman A. MacColl

Mrs. William R. Morrison

Mr. Royal Bailey Farnum

Mr. Walter Frederick Dickinson

Roger Williams of Providence not F. R. S.

By WINTHROP TILLEY*

April 22, 1932.

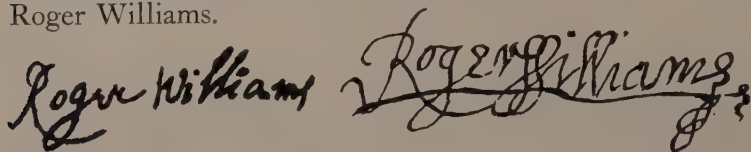
My dear Mr. Chapin:

I am giving below the results of my investigation of the Roger-Williams-a-member-of-the-Royal-Society rumor, as you requested.

According to Birch's *History of the Royal Society*, a Roger Williams was proposed a candidate for the Royal Society by Sir Robert Moray (Murray) at the desire of Sir Paul Neile on January 27, 1663/4; he was elected February 3, and admitted on February 17 of the same year (I 375, 377, 385). The name of Mr. Williams also appears as a member of two committees of the Society, as of March 30 of the same year (I 406-407). The committees were the mechanical and that for the history of trade. Birch also states "Mr. Williams was desired to bring in his observations of the curiosities of England." (I 388. This is in the same year.)

Frederick E. Brasch, writing in the *Scientific Monthly*, (Oct. 1931, p. 343) has assumed that this was the same Roger Williams who founded Providence. Investigation of the matter, however, has led me to the conclusion that it must have been another man of the same name.

So far as is known, the founder of Providence did not leave the American colonies after 1654. A signature of the Williams referred to by Birch, however, appears on the records of the Royal Society. You have told me that this signature, a facsimile of which you have, differs in important respects from any known signatures of the American Roger Williams.



OF PROVIDENCE, 1656

F. R. S. 1664

The men who sponsored the election of Mr. Williams to the Royal Society, Moray and Neile, were intimates of Charles II. It is apparent from a scrutiny of Birch's History for several years prior to 1664 that Neile's chief function as a fellow of the Society was to act as intermediary between the Society and the King. If he had strong scientific interests, the fact does not appear from Birch's account, which is given in considerable detail. Moray who was the "soul" of the Society during its early years, also carried on negotiations with the King. He had scientific interests, but chiefly in the fields of physics and astronomy. The only work on the basis of which the American Roger Williams could have been elected was his "Key," published twenty years before the election in question took place. This work was of philological and ethnological interest, but neither Moray nor Neile seems to have had interests in those fields. Furthermore, the radical political philosophy of the American Roger Williams would have been anything but palatable to Moray and Neile, both staunch and noted Royalists, and the latter the son of an Anglican archbishop.

A scrutiny of the list of the known friends of the American Roger Williams at the time of his residence in England, 1652-4, as given by Dr. James Ernst (RIHS Coll 24:123, 124) and in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, fails to

reveal any connections which might have led to his election to the Royal Society.

The Roger Williams who was elected to the Royal Society in 1663/4 seems to have been an obscure individual about whom nothing is known except the fact of his election.

I shall of course be glad to have you make use of any or all of this information, as you see fit.

Yours very truly,

WINTHROP TILLEY.

P. S. I should add also that I examined the correspondence of John Winthrop, Jr., himself a fellow of the Royal Society, without finding any reference to the election of Roger Williams, although he was in correspondence with the American of that name in 1664.

*Mr. Tilley is working on "The Literature of Physical Science in America from the Beginnings to 1765" as a Ph.D. thesis for the Department of English, in Brown University.

Henry Marchant's Bookplate

The bookplate of Henry Marchant is reproduced from an original through the courtesy of Miss Mary A. Harris. Judge Henry Marchant, 1741-1796, was Attorney General, 1771-1777 and a member of the Continental Congress, 1777-1789, and a biography of him appears in Updike's *Memoirs of the Rhode Island Bar*, pages 83-89 and in the *Biographical Cyclopaedia of Rhode Island*, p. 145. A note accompanying the Marchant coat of arms, which is preserved in the family reads: "William le Marchant—son of Josias; William le Marchant—son of James; Eleazer le Marchant—son of Thomas petitioned for Arms in 1689 as being descendants of Peter le Marchant of the Isle of Guernsey, who lived in the year 1300, and from whom the pedigree is traced down to the above said William, William, and Eleazer, as appears by the Register of Descents in the Herald's office. The arms are *Azure a Chevron or, between 3 owls argent Legs of the second.*"

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Mr. Louis E. Robinson
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Rev. Arthur Rogers
Mrs. Mabel K. Rogers
Mr. Henry W. Sackett
Mr. Kenneth Shaw Safe
Mrs. T. Shaw Safe
Mrs. Harold P. Salisbury
Mr. Henry Salomon
Mr. Henry T. Samson
Mrs. G. Coburn Sanctuary
Mrs. George C. Scant
Mrs. David S. Seaman
Mr. Henry M. Sessions
Miss Ellen D. Sharpe
Mr. Henry D. Sharpe
Mrs. Frederick E. Shaw
Mrs. George St. J. Sheffield
Mr. Charles Shepard
Mr. Clarence E. Sherman
Mr. Edward A. Sherman
Mr. Harry B. Sherman
Mrs. Arthur F. Short
Mrs. Philip B. Simonds
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Mr. Henry L. Slader
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Edgar B. Smith, M.D.
Mrs. Edwin C. Smith
Joseph Smith, M.D.

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R. Morton Smith, M.D.
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Mr. Ward E. Smith
Mrs. Whitney Smith
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Mr. Thomas E. Steere
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Miss Maud Lyman Stevens
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Mr. Henry Y. Stites
Mr. George A. Stone
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